

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 NIC-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 IO-14 /121 W

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R 031630Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5038

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, TS

SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA'S VISIT TO GABES: SPECULATION ON
POSSIBLE REPLAY OF JERBA WITH QADHAFI

1. ANNOUNCEMENT APRIL 2 OF BOURGUIBA'S SCHEDULE FOR
VISIT TO GABES AS PLANNED APRIL 4-6 HAS TOUCHED OFF
FURTHER SPECULATION HERE OF POSSIBLE BOURGUIBA-QADHAFI

MEETING EITHER IN GABES OR JERBA DURING THIS VISIT.

SPECULATION SPURRED BY ACTIVITIES OF DEPUTY TO PRIME MIN
MOHAMED SAYAH WHO RETURNED FROM VISIT TO TRIPOLI
MARCH 31 WITH MESSAGE FROM QADHAFI IN REPLY TO MESSAGE
FROM BOURGUIBA. SAYAH DELIVERED REPLY TO BOURGUIBA
APRIL 1 AND RECEIVED LIBYAN HIGH REP APRIL 2. ACCORDING
UNCONNIRMED REPORT BY EMBASSY LOCAL SAYAH INDICATED TO
HIGH REP THAT BOURGUIBA WILL RECEIVE QADHAFI IF HE WISHES
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MAKE VISIT. PROPOSED TIMING AND PLACE NOT KNOWN, BUT
PUBLISHED SCHEDULED BOURGUIBA'S VISIT WOULD PROVIDE TIME

FOR QADHAFI VISIT IF DESIRED.

2. FACT BOURGUIBA APRIL 2 IN SPEECH TO WINNERS OF SOUSSE CULTURAL AWARDS AS REPORTED BY FBIS, USED OCCASION MAKE PARENTHETICAL REMARKS ABOUT UNITY WITHOUT MENTIONING JERBA MERGER AGREEMENT IS CITED AS FURTHER INDICATION BOURGUIBA PREPARING LOCAL PUBLIC FOR ANOTHER MEETING WITH QADHAFI. SOME OBSERVERS EXPECT THIS WILL BE ANOTHER PALMARIUM-TYPE LECTURE IN KEEPING WITH BOURGUIBA'S MARCH 18 SPEECH (A-48) AND CURRENT GOT POLICY ON MERGER.

3. DIFFERENT VIEW IS THAT BOURGUIBA NOT HAPPY WITH BOUMEDIENNE'S PROPOSALS ON MAGHREB COOPERATION AND MAY TRY USE ANOTHER MEETING WITH QADHAFI TO MAKE BOUMEDIENNE MORE FORTHCOMING. WE TEND DISCOUNT THIS ONE BUT WITH BOURGUIBA IT ALWAYS POSSIBLE HE TRYING PLAY BOTH SIDES AGAINST THE MIDDLE IN HOPES SOMEDAY REALIZING HIS DREAM OF MAGHREB CONFEDERATION.

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